

The Interface between Indigenous Knowledge and Libraries: the need for non-Māori Librarians to make sense of mātauranga Māori in their professional lives.

Libraries in Aotearoa New Zealand are predominantly founded on Western cultural ideals and definitions of knowledge. Mātauranga Māori (Māori indigenous knowledge), like other types of Indigenous Knowledge, is different from the Western understanding of knowledge in many ways. One of the main differences is the holistic nature of mātauranga Māori in that it incorporates cultural knowledge such as tikanga Māori (Māori customs or lifeways). Since the profession of librarianship centres on knowledge and information, it is vital that information professionals in Aotearoa engage with mātauranga Māori.

Libraries face specific issues related to mātauranga Māori due to their connection to print materials by or about Māori people and culture, which require a different approach from non-indigenous materials. Some broad examples include metadata and ownership. Library Professionals in Aotearoa also have a professional imperative to provide equitable service to Māori and to engage well with mātauranga Māori due to Te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document of present-day New Zealand, as well as international imperatives and the profession's commitment to bicultural engagement (having an awareness of indigenous knowledge paradigms is a compulsory element of becoming a Professionally Registered librarian in Aotearoa New Zealand (LIANZA, 2013)). This introduces an added dimension to librarians' professional learning and development.

Despite these imperatives, and work to highlight effective practice, evidence suggests that librarians in Aotearoa are still not engaging with mātauranga Māori as well as they might. Throughout the last 25 years, studies have highlighted the need for professional learning and development to help librarians make sense of mātauranga Māori. Though advances have been made, recent studies still show that there is much work to be done in order for librarians to engage well with mātauranga Māori in order to provide equitable bicultural service, with several studies highlighting professional learning and development as a way of addressing this.

This research, currently in progress, seeks to answer the question "How are non-Māori librarians making sense of mātauranga Māori?". The research will use the Sense-Making approach to research and theory building developed by Brenda Dervin and colleagues, probing the situational factors, gap-bridging approaches and outcomes of engagement in Sense-Making by non-Māori librarians in relation to mātauranga Māori, to produce a model of Sense-Making in this context. The role of professional learning and development within the process of Sense-Making will be a particular area of focus.

This paper will detail the context of the research project. Understanding the complex interactions between libraries and librarians and mātauranga Māori or other types of Indigenous Knowledge is the key to the value of this research and its potential for impacting professional practice. It will also explain the rationale for choosing the Sense-Making approach and the ways it will be incorporated in the research.

Keywords: Information Behaviour, Indigenous Knowledge, Librarians, Professional Learning and Development, Aotearoa New Zealand